



MEDIA RELEASE

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Heroes in Water Color: Eastern Shore Native Bryan Collier Celebrates American Icons in “Defining Moments” Exhibition at Reginald F. Lewis Museum On View January 19 – May 26, 2013

Monday, January 7, 2013 (Baltimore, MD) – With the start of a new year, visitors to the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture will have a chance to view the richly detailed watercolor creations of award-winning artist Bryan Collier. *Defining Moments* features more than 40 images from four of his most popular children’s books including *Rosa*; *John’s Secret Dreams: The Life of John Lennon*; *Visiting Langston*; and *Martin’s Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* A public opening reception will take place on **Saturday, January 19, 2013** from Noon to 4 p.m. along with “The Imagery of Stories” presentation and discussion with the artist. The exhibition is on view until Sunday, May 26.

Collier, an African American illustrator who grew up in Pocomoke, MD on the lower Eastern Shore, has received national attention for his inventive approach, which incorporates both watercolor and collage. Collier was inspired to work in a collage format upon recalling his grandmother’s quilting techniques that he observed during his childhood. When he realized there were not many books that featured children of color, he decided to create his own. He was particularly inspired by the works of Crockett Johnson as well as Ezra Jack Keats, who was a pioneer in portraying African American characters in his works. Collier’s exceptional talent led him to win first place in a Congressional competition, to have his art displayed in the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C., and to win a scholarship to Pratt Institute in New York City where he graduated with honors with a bachelor’s degree in fine arts.

“We are especially grateful to begin this year honoring the work of an African American artist who has roots in Maryland,” says Reginald F. Lewis Museum Executive Director Dr. Skipp Sanders. “Bryan Collier is able to capture iconic moments within our nation’s history in a uniquely expressive way.”

Driven by his passion for young people, Collier helped create the Harlem Horizon Art studio in the Harlem Hospital that encourages children to use painting as a creative emotional outlet. He dedicates much of his time visiting schools and inspiring students. Collier’s works are highly acclaimed; he has received several awards including the Caldecott Honor, Coretta Scott King Award for Illustrators, and the Jane Addams Children’s Book Awards for Picture Book.

“I hope this exhibition inspires individuals and families of all backgrounds. Whether you are a student, an aspiring illustrator, or art appreciator, it is my goal that you leave this exhibition with a passion to learn more about this country’s great history,” Collier explains.

Bryan Collier's books will be available for purchase the Reginald F. Lewis Museum shop. For more information on this exhibition, visit www.RFLewisMuseum.org or call 443-263-1800.

Featured Exhibition Programs

Friday, January 18, 10: 30 a.m.

Book Talk with Bryan Collier (Grades 2 – 5)

School groups are invited to join award-winning children's book illustrator Bryan Collier and create their own watercolor collage. Collier will explain the creative techniques that he used in his books *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* and *Rosa*.

For school groups only; to register, contact Joy Hall at 443-263-1852.

Saturday, January 19, Noon to 4 p.m.

Opening Reception for *Defining Moments: An Exhibition of Works by Bryan Collier*

Start this festive weekend with a free public opening of the museum's new exhibition. Light refreshments will be provided. Bryan Collier's books and art will be available for purchase, and a book signing will take place.

Free Admission All Day

Saturday, January 19, Noon to 4 p.m.

The Imagery of Stories: Bryan Collier (for all ages)

Meet acclaimed children's book illustrator Bryan Collier and join him for a presentation and discussion of his artistic techniques used in *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, *Rosa* and *Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope*. Children can create their own illustrations following the talk, and light refreshments will be provided.

About the Reginald F. Lewis Museum

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum is Baltimore's premier facility highlighting the history and accomplishments of African Americans with a special focus on Maryland's African American community. A Smithsonian affiliate, the museum is the East Coast's largest African American museum occupying an 82,000 square-foot facility with ample permanent and special exhibition space, interactive learning environments, auditorium, resource center, oral history recording studio, museum shop, café, classrooms, meeting rooms, outside terrace and reception areas. The museum is located near Baltimore's Inner Harbor at the corner of Pratt and President Streets. For more information, please call 443-263-1800 or visit the museum's website at www.RFLewisMuseum.org.

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